

Mrs. Ramsey; only with darker complexion, and a careless, merry look.

"Oh, Uncle Geordie!" cried Alec, again throwing his arms round his uncle, "I was a naughty boy and out of temper, I know, but it is not Kirstin's fault, she is such a capital girl; you'll like Kirstin so much."

Geordie Graham laughed again, but after another glance at the discomfited nurse-maid, he compassionately took his nephew in his arms, and carried him out of the room.

(To be continued.)

THE GREAT MARQUIS.

CHAPTER VII.

"Now by heaven we will not falter
But united firm to stand,
Lay our hearts upon the altar
Offer'd to our native land."

War Song from "Körner."



T was a hot August afternoon that the royal army lay encamped at Kilsyth, the heavy folds of the royal standard clinging round the staff in the sultry summer air. Montrose was the sole stay of Charles now, for the English Royalists could no longer make head against their enemies, and the ill-fated king had during that same month been completely defeated at the battle of Naseby.

It was unfortunate for the Covenanting army that it should have two chiefs, Argyle and Baillie, for the leaders of the various divisions declined to obey the orders of either. Argyle, indeed, had no knowledge of military affairs, and Baillie, who was a clever officer, was not allowed to follow out his own plan of the battle. At the same time it must be observed that no one could understand Baillie's plan, consequently it is not wonderful, perhaps, that the army was unable to execute it. At least it is the only excuse that can be brought forward for a far superior and well-trained force being so completely defeated by a small, half-disciplined body of men. The Covenanters' account was that two of their regiments charged too soon, contrary to Baillie's orders, and were repulsed by the "rebels" (so they called the king's troops), who

sprang over the dykes and broke their ranks. But the battle was bravely fought on both sides. It was a very hot, sultry evening ; and as Montrose's men had to charge the enemy up-hill, their general told them to disencumber themselves of their plaids and doublets, and set the example by taking off, not only his cuirass, but his doublet also, and fighting in his shirt-sleeves.

Encouraged by their gallant Marquis, they rushed so impetuously to the assault that they forgot to wait for his signal : they were consequently at first driven back, but the old Earl of Airlie, the chief of the Ogilvies, a nobleman about seventy years of age, led on all the gentlemen of his house to their aid. The Covenanters could not stand their desperate charge : they fell back before the bloody swords of the Ogilvies, and of the two Highland regiments led on by Donald Macdonald of Clanronald, and Donald, the son of Hector of Maclean. In short, Argyle fled twenty miles without looking behind him or drawing bridle, and he then jumped into a vessel lying in the Firth of Forth, and did not think himself safe till he had put out to sea.

So ended the battle of Kilsyth, the most glorious, the most bloody, and—the last of our hero's victories.

The news soon spread far and wide, causing terror amongst his enemies, joy and delight among his friends ; the path to Edinburgh lay smooth and open before the conqueror's feet, and there was no enemy remaining strong enough to bar his progress. New friends now began to crowd in from all quarters, some who had been too timid to join him before ; others who had hated him in the days when he was proclaimed a traitor, excommunicated, and a price set upon his head, now declared themselves his firmest friends. Montrose received them all courteously and pursued his journey southwards, having sent his nephew Archibald, the young master of Napier, with a thousand horse, to receive the submission of various towns and districts round Edinburgh. The master went first to Linlithgow, the prison from which he had escaped, and where now he clasped in his arms his aged father, his sisters, and his young wife, Lady Elizabeth, of whom he was passionately fond, for Archibald, though only twenty-one, had been married five years, and had three children.

Lord Graham and his brother were still prisoners, for the noble boys refused to be exchanged lest they should cost their father a valuable prisoner and thereby do an injury to the royal cause.

Once more a bright ray of sunlight seemed to shine on Montrose's fortunes; success had crowned his efforts: Edinburgh was at his feet in terror and submission, but, alas! the sunbeam was soon to fade away never to return again. At this moment the Highlanders asked leave to return home, to get in their harvests and visit their wives and families. The Marquis had never wanted them more than he did now, but there was no possibility of keeping the Highlanders when once they had resolved to go, so he yielded with his usual good-humour, and after assembling them all in his presence, and thanking and rewarding them all for their services, he let them depart. Alaster Macdonald, on whom he conferred the honour of knighthood, begged leave to go with them, promising to look after them and bring them back as soon as his general should want them. Montrose gave permission, but Alaster proved false to his engagements and never came near the Marquis again.

As for Montrose himself, he received a flattering letter from the king, and the commission of captain-general of Scotland; Prince Maurice, who had never been active in his royal uncle's service, had, with his brother Rupert, fallen into disgrace, and a sort of nominal command which he had possessed in Scotland was now taken away. Though his army was so much weakened by the departure of the Highlanders, Montrose prepared as soon as possible to march to the Tweed, in compliance with the earnest wishes of Charles, and endeavour to persuade the once powerful Border families to join him, and to rouse the loyalty of the nobles of Douglas and Traquair.

But the days of Border chivalry were passed; the Scots of Buccleuch, the Douglasses of Annandale and Liddesdale, the Maxwells of Nithsdale had lost all the power they possessed in the days of James V. and James VI., and many of them too were devoted to Argyle. That crafty chief was now at Berwick, and already had sent pressing messages to General David Leslie, who was commanding the Scotch army in England, and Leslie was now marching northwards to encounter Montrose. Our Marquis was still on the Borders waiting till he should hear from his sovereign. Anxiously was he expecting Alaster's return, but that false chieftain was far away: still more anxiously did he urge Lord Aboyne to return to him with his Gordons, for the fickle youth had, probably at his father's desire, left him at the same time with Alaster and all the Gordons with him. It was in vain: his firm and

loving friend, Lord Gordon, was no more, and Montrose had nothing to hope from the attachment and loyalty of his clan.

It was the 12th of September, a dark and cloudy night, when the royal army took up its quarters at Philiphaugh, a small village on the river Ettrick. All was still and quiet; the scouts who were sent out to search the country round kept riding in asserting there was no enemy near, but it soon proved that they were fatally mistaken. In a poor-looking house in the village, Montrose was sitting with his faithful friends, Lord Napier, Lord Airlie, and Ludovic Lindsay the loyal Earl of Crawford, busily engaged in writing despatches to be sent off to the king by break of day.

All night long they sat debating and writing, when they were roused from their labours by a hasty knock at the door. Before they had time to reply, a frightened messenger rushed in, saying that Leslie and six thousand men were half a mile off. The sun had not risen, and the fogs, which had hung over the country for several days, were so thick that Leslie had never been seen by the scouts.

Montrose instantly sprang upon the first horse that stood near, and followed by his officers, who scrambled after him, galloped at headlong speed to the camp, which lay on the other side of the river. There all was confusion, but his well-known and welcome voice, rising above the tumult, soon called his troops to order, and they began hastily to rally round him. But almost at the same moment the sound of Leslie's trumpets was heard, and then came the charge of his heavy mail-clad troopers, the brother-soldiers of Cromwell's resistless cavalry. Alas! what chance had the half-disciplined horsemen of the brave Montrose against these veteran troops? They still maintained their ground, but the infantry, chiefly Irish, surrendered with a promise of mercy. And where was Montrose himself while this disastrous scene of rout went on? Surrounded on all sides by victorious enemies, he fought in the midst of them with thirty Cavaliers, having given up all hope of escape, and firmly resolved to fall rather than surrender to an enemy which knew no mercy. But the Marquis of Douglas, who was by his side, entreated him to make an effort to save his life for the sake of his sovereign.

Montrose reined up for a moment to take breath, and looked round upon the mass of his enemies pressing upon him from every side, then telling his friends to keep close round him, he spurred his horse to one last desperate charge. The rebel troopers fell back before his vigorous

arm, and he at length cut his way through them, and soon left the sad field of Philiphaugh behind. But the horrors of Philiphaugh did not end with the battle; the first act of the victorious Covenanters was to put to death, in cold blood, all the prisoners to whom they had promised mercy. Unhappily, too, a great many of the Marquis's friends, after escaping with him from the field, lost their way, and were taken prisoners, amongst them Sir William Rollock, one of his earliest friends, and the brave young Irishman, O'Kyan, the hero of Fyvie, besides many more of noble rank; but their fate was not yet decided.

CHAPTER VIII.

"It was a' for our rightful king
We left fair Scotia's strand."

LORD OGILVIE.

MONTROSE himself had reached his old haunts in the Grampians, where he soon received intelligence of the massacre of his troops and the capture of his friends. Deep and bitter was his sorrow at the tidings, but he was still as energetic and earnest as ever, and was quite ready to begin his exertions all over again. But his great anxiety for the present was to collect troops enough to rescue his gallant followers from the certain death to which he knew they were doomed. Alas! his efforts were vain; though the Highlands answered once more to the call of their favourite, and a small army collected round him, before his preparations were complete the mournful intelligence reached him that several of the prisoners had been put to death. Montrose hurried down immediately to the neighbourhood of Glasgow, endeavouring to provoke Leslie to a battle; and such was still the terror of his name that the executions were stopped while he was in the neighbourhood. But after remaining there a month, he again returned to the Highlands to implore Huntly to give him the aid of his Gordons. But that ungenerous nobleman refused to lend him the slightest assistance, and the Parliament seized upon the opportunity to continue the massacre.

Only two of the prisoners were saved, Lord Hartfell and the brave Lord Ogilvie, the son of Lord Airlie; and the motive of this clemency does not do credit to the chief lords of the Covenanting party. Argyle hated Ogilvie, and was dying to have his blood, but Hamilton wished to save him, and contrived his escape. Argyle was so angry when he heard of it, that he determined to be revenged on the Duke of

Hamilton. This could best be accomplished by releasing one of Hamilton's enemies, and he accordingly selected Lord Hartfell, and set him at liberty. Such were the humane and generous principles which governed the conduct of the leaders of the Whig party in Scotland during the seventeenth century.

Bitter was the grief, and burning the indignation of Montrose, when he heard the melancholy tidings of the massacre, but he would not for a moment listen to the advice of some of his friends, to put to death the prisoners he had in his power. If their enemies were cruel and faithless, he said, that was all the more reason why they should set them an example of generosity and mercy, and on no account imitate them in their evil deeds. Notwithstanding his repeated disappointments, Montrose still did not despair of gaining over Huntly, and even rode over alone one night to Gordon Castle, to try what his own powers of persuasion could do. He thought this time that he had succeeded, and that Huntly was won; but he was mistaken, for as soon as he was gone, Huntly tried to set on foot an expedition independently of Montrose, and the result was only fatal to himself.

Meanwhile, our hero received a letter from Charles, who was at Oxford, in which the king told him that he intended to join his forces to those of the Scottish Covenanters, then encamped before Newark. He added, further, that he wished Montrose and the remnant of his army to meet him there, if he should find out that the Scots were loyally disposed and ready to forgive the loyalty of the Marquis himself.

Before Montrose had time to act upon this letter he received another short but melancholy note, dated from Newark, in which Charles thanked him gratefully and affectionately for all the hardships he had endured for his sake and for all his loyal services, but telling him that he must now lay down his arms and go to France, where he would await further instructions.

Montrose was petrified at this order, but he guessed at once that the Covenanting army had forced the king to send him this message, and that, in point of fact, Charles was now a prisoner in the hands of his own subjects, and was compelled to write what they chose to dictate, not what he wished to say. Before he complied with the royal mandate he wrote an urgent letter to his sovereign, begging him to tell him if it was really and truly his Majesty's desire that he should give up the cause as lost, entreating, at all events, that arrangements might be made

for the safety of his loyal friends. But Charles was now a prisoner in the hands of Montrose's bitterest enemies, Argyle, Loudon, Lindsay, and others; and he was no longer able to follow the counsels of the faithful friend who had served him so well. On the 16th of July, 1646, Charles wrote again to the Marquis, commanding him to accept the conditions which General Middleton would offer him, and which, he assured him, would be honourable. It was the king's final command, and now the Marquis had no choice left but to obey. Middleton luckily was no very violent Covenanter: he had something of the Cavalier in him, and perhaps might secretly have admired the character of his bold opponent, and have felt

"That stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel."

However that may be, Middleton and Montrose arranged a meeting on an open plain, each with one attendant to hold his horse, and here they settled the terms of the capitulation.

It was concluded that the Marquis himself, Ludovic, Earl of Crawford, and Sir John Hurry, who for some reason best known to himself had suddenly left the Covenanters to join Montrose, were to leave Scotland before the 1st of September, in a vessel to be provided for them by the Scottish Estates. All the rest of his friends were to remain and keep their property just as if they had never had anything to do with him. The Estates were in a great rage at what they thought the mildness of Middleton's terms; they declared them to be *contrary to the Covenant*, and began excommunicating the Cavaliers right and left; but General Middleton, who had a soldier's contempt for all fanatics, kept his word, without taking the slightest notice of their anger.

The negotiations over, Montrose departed to Rattray to dismiss his followers, and their parting was a melancholy scene. He had so endeared himself to them; he had walked by their side in so many a difficult and fatiguing march; his gentle and courteous manners, his perfect knowledge of the character and temperament of the Highlander had so won upon their hearts that they all worshipped him as a superior being, while they loved him as a personal friend. Many wept, some on their knees implored him not to send them away. His warm heart and loving nature were deeply touched by these marks of affection, but he would not let them follow him to exile, and so they parted.

This painful scene over, the Marquis set out directly for his house of Old Montrose, with only Sir John Hurry for a companion, to wait there for the ship which the Estates were to send for them. It is curious to think that the last time Sir John had visited Old Montrose was when he carried off into captivity the only remaining children of the Marquis, and now he was riding into it side by side with their father.

But Montrose soon began to grow rather uneasy, for the 1st of September drew near, and the promised vessel appeared not. He never doubted that the Scottish Estates, with their usual treachery, were plotting to detain him beyond the day agreed upon, in order that they might have a pretext for seizing him. But he was always full of resources, and he baffled this time his faithless foes as he had often done before. The vessel indeed arrived, but it was the *last day of August*, and the boat was so leaky that the master of it, who was a crabbed Presbyterian, declared he would not put to sea for several days.

Accordingly Montrose sent Hurry, his chaplain, Dr. Wishart, who had been with him during a great part of his campaigns, and the rest of his friends, together with all his baggage and servants, on board a Norwegian vessel which was lying at Stonehaven, and was about to sail for Norway. That same evening, the 3rd of September, the Marquis bade an eternal farewell to the home of his boyhood, and embarking in a small wherry disguised as the servant of Master James Wood, a clergyman, he quitted his country for an exile which he knew not how long would last.

He was only thirty-three years old.

Before we follow him to a foreign land I will say a few words about some of his friends of whom I have often spoken. His boys, Graham and Robert, were still prisoners, though they were afterwards allowed to live with their grandfather, Lord Southesk; the Estates took great pains to educate them after their own ideas, but they certainly did not succeed with Lord Graham, who remained fondly attached to his father and his father's cause. The good Lord Napier was no more: he and his son Archibald had escaped with Montrose from Philiphaugh, but his health gave way soon after. The Marquis was obliged to leave him behind in one of his hurried marches, and when he returned he found that the brother-in-law whom he had loved and honoured as a father, had just expired. Argyle took possession of his estates and of those of Montrose, but Archibald, now the young Lord Napier, made a gallant

attempt to defend both. He shut himself up in one of his uncle's residences, the Castle of Kincardine, with his cousin, John Drummond of Balloch; and the young men being attacked by Middleton with a large force, held the place till the wells were dried up. The garrison now could hold out no longer, as they were dying with thirst, and Napier believed his doom was certain. But a young page called John Graham undertook to show him a way by which they might escape. Accordingly one dark night when the moon had gone down the boy led three horses to a postern gate, and the trio rode quietly through the very middle of the enemy, and succeeded by this daring feat in making their escape to Montrose, who was still in the north. This happened in the month of February 1646.

After the capitulation, when the Marquis was obliged to leave the country, his devoted nephew would willingly have accompanied him with his family, but his estates were in great disorder and required his presence, and Montrose would not let him come. It is remarkable that the Great Marquis had the rare gift of making those about him passionately fond of him. The devotion of Lord Gordon for him was quite romantic in its nature, and as for Archibald Napier, his friendship for his uncle was a sort of proverb, and drew upon him a long lecture from a puritanical old relative who bore the somewhat ridiculous-sounding name of the Laird of Bowhopple. This old gentleman meant very kindly, however, and had done him some signal service, having influence with the Estates; but some of his expressions in the letter he wrote to Archibald were certainly rather plain and outspoken.

Bowhopple begs him "to return yet in time before all time be lost, and let the first beginning of your majority in age evidence better resolutions than did the ending of your minority."

He adds: "It is high time for you to resolve not to adhere any more to your uncle's courses and ways. Let not, I pray you, the *preposterous* love you carry to him any longer blind the eyes of your understanding, nor miscarry you."


But this eloquent language had no effect on Archibald, who was by no means to be turned away from his allegiance. Indeed, the young Lord Napier's stout defence of Kincardine had so enraged the Scottish Estates, that as the only way of appeasing them it was settled that Lady Elizabeth Napier and her children should stay in Scotland while Archibald followed Montrose to Paris for the present.

(To be continued.)

THE CHINA BOWL.

A REMINISCENCE FROM GRANDMAMMA'S POTPOURRI.

PRELUDE.

 REVERIE by firelight. Verily 'tis a pleasant thing when one can sit as I have been doing for the last half-hour, with nothing to disturb the train of one's thoughts, for as such one cannot reckon the lulling accompaniment of the wind sighing in the trees outside, the tinkle of the cinders falling on the clean-swept hearth, and the drowsy fanning of the "fuffin' lowe," as the flames rise and fall in the red fire-caves, casting fantastic shadows on the oak-panelled walls of my little snugery, and playing strange vagaries with the antique carving of the chimneypiece—now tipping with fire a chubby Cupid's sheaf of arrows, now throwing a glossy light over the feathers of a group of dead game, or a ruddy glow on the contents of a fruit-basket. And if perfume, as well as music, favour the even flow of drowsy thought, I lack it not; a fragrance rises from a rare old china bowl at my elbow—a fragrance as of summer gardens and groves of eastern spices blended in one; it minds me of the many memories of my past life, sweet and pungent mingled together in the "golden bowl" of the heart. The potpourri of life! who would be without it? Though the roses are faded, one may keep their fragrance still. A light step on the stair—a hand on the door. Must my reverie, then, come to an end? Not yet, for it is only my eldest granddaughter, and she shall have her share in it: I can continue it aloud for her benefit; who knows but she may profit by her old grandmother's experiences? My eldest grandchild, my white rosebud! How bonnie she looks in her snowy evening dress, with her fair hair and heaven-blue eyes! "Grandmamma, how sweet your potpourri smells this evening," she says, burying her nose in the contents of the china bowl. "So I was thinking, granddaughter; this warm fire-shine draws out the scent, and it also brings back in all their vividness many things stored up in my memory. Come, sit down on this footstool at my feet, and you shall hear a reminiscence from grandmamma's potpourri of life, concerning this very china bowl."

THE STORY.

“‘Better a finger aff than aye waggin’,” says the good old Scotch proverb, and I doubt whether the truth of it ever came home to any one more forcibly than it did to me, for the occasion on which I first heard it was that of one of the deepest disgraces of my young days. Many years ago—how many I am afraid to tell you, for it would make me out such a very ancient dame—well, never mind; long, long ago, in the days when I wore short frocks, and had not long emerged from pinafores, my brothers and sister and I were sitting at the breakfast-table one 21st of December, busily munching our brown bread and butter. At one end sat my mother, making my father’s coffee, and opposite to her sat my father himself, reading his letters. Now there was one of these missives concerning which we young fry felt a very strong curiosity; it was a large blue sheet of paper folded together (for envelopes had not come into fashion then), addressed in a bold, and, as we thought, very fierce-looking hand, and sealed with an enormous seal of red wax, on which flourished a most imposing crest and coat-of-arms; the post-mark was Dumfries. This much we knew, for we had closely examined the letter before our elders came down, and had hazarded many guesses concerning its contents. When my father took it up, sundry pieces of bread were suspended midway to as many mouths, and various pairs of eyes followed his as they travelled slowly down the page. At length he came to the end, folded the paper carefully together, looked perplexed, hummed, laid down the letter, took it up again, and opened his lips to speak. *What* was he going to say? We devoured him ravenously with our eyes. He said: ‘My dear!’ my mother looked up. ‘Well, Rupert?’ ‘Here is an invitation from my father; this is what he says:—

“‘MY DEAR SON,

“‘Bring your wife, and come and spend Christmas with us at Kildrummie. We shall expect you on the evening of the 23rd, when the carriage will meet you at ——. You many bring one child. Commend me to your wife.

“‘I am, my dear son,

“‘Your affectionate father,

“‘ALEXANDER KER.

"Short and sweet, isn't it?" When my father began to read, my mother's countenance slightly clouded: when he came to the words, 'you may bring one child,' her face expressed an alarming degree of consternation. '*A child*, my dear Rupert! What *shall* we do? Your father's particularity! Your father's *old china*!' 'My dear, it can't be helped; it is too good an opportunity to be lost! this unfortunate coolness (my mother darted a warning look at him)—children, you may go.' The order came like a death-knell to our hopes. Five pairs of little ears had been drinking in every word that was uttered—brown bread and butter, mugs of milk, everything forgotten in intense curiosity to hear more. It was a cruel disappointment, and—our senses becoming once more alive to mundane things—we hadn't finished our breakfast! However, it could not be helped, so trooping out of the dining-room we betook ourselves to our favourite retreat under the drawing-room piano, to do the next best thing to hearing more, viz., to discuss what we *had* heard. Would the invitation be accepted? We were unanimously of opinion that it would; a visit to that place of many speculations, that unknown Kildrummie, which our youthful imaginations had invested with a halo of solemn magnificence, was—as my father had said—too good an opportunity to be lost. My father and mother had only been there once since their marriage; we never: the first fact we set down to the 'unfortunate coolness' my father had spoken of (by-the-by, we hadn't the remotest idea what that meant; my eldest brother rather thought it had something to do with the climate); the reason for our exclusion you will easily understand when I tell you that my grandfather had a mania for old china. On the next question, i.e., who the one child was to be, our little assembly was divided. My sister was certain that I, being the eldest, would be the favoured one; the others dissented from this, and were of opinion that a boy would be chosen to represent the youthful hope of our family. However, our minds were soon set at rest on both these points; my father wrote, accepting the invitation, and my mother came into the room with the announcement that I was to be the fortunate 'one child,' and forthwith carried me off to assist in the business of packing. To what a pitch of importance was I suddenly raised! I became quite an object of envy to the others, who, however, were disinterested enough to overwhelm me with congratulations, at the same time as they deplored the fate which assigned them a

Christmas at home, while I, the favourite of fortune, was to obtain that height of happiness—a visit to Kildrummie. The much-desired hour arrived, we were off at last, and the four bay horses of the royal mail coach were carrying us at the top of their speed, northward ho! It was a long, long journey, and I have but a very faint recollection of it, for my ideas—galloping even faster than the coach-horses—were already at the longed-for goal, vividly picturing what it would be like. Even now I can see that glowing castle in the air, the building of which kept me so quiet during the journey, and a very queer one it was, not a bit like the reality, as you will presently see. The structure of my imagination was light and airy, such a fabric as I had read of in ‘The Arabian Nights,’ with gilded domes and flashing minarets, lofty halls and endless suites of gorgeously-furnished rooms, filled—a slight deviation from the eastern pattern—with an infinite variety of china vessels; china plates replacing the pictures, china cups in lieu of ornaments, china here, china there, china everywhere. Greatly enhancing the beauty doubtless, but concerning the *comfort* of this enchanted palace, I began to have serious misgivings. I was still employed in rearing my air castle, and was gradually falling into that extremely drowsy condition in which the landmarks between things real and things imaginary become faint and ever fainter, when the four bay horses suddenly drew up with a jerk which threw me forward into the lap of an old lady, considerably shaking the nerves, not to mention the fat sides of a little over-fed spaniel who was reposing there, and causing him to emit a most horrible yell, which must have gone to the old lady’s heart, for she darted a look of heartrending reproach at poor me, as though I had hurt her dog out of malice prepense, and began fondling the fat sides, and bemoaning the sufferings of her ‘sweetest, dearest, most angelic darling’ in a manner that must have overwhelmed with remorse any one who had not, like me, caught sight of an equipage more magnificent than anything my dreams had ever pictured, drawn by two splendid grays, whose silver-mounted harness flashed in the light which streamed from the inn-door, before which the coach had stopped. A tall footman, in scarlet livery and powdered hair, assisted us to dismount, with a condescension which I thought truly touching in one who enjoyed the privilege of driving every day behind that splendid equipage, which I felt sure would have taken the shine even out of that of Cinderella’s fairy


godmother. I seemed to have grown an inch taller when, seated therein beside my father and mother, we drove rapidly off towards Kildrummie. My poor mother! she grew nervously restless as we neared the end of our journey. I believe she was a good deal afraid of my grandparents, and felt my presence an alarming responsibility; however, to my shame be it spoken, I had not learned to think for others in those days, and I was far too intent on trying to make out the features of the country through which we were passing to trouble my head about anything else. It was not much I could see, for it was late, and though there was what we used to call a 'broken moon,' great black clouds would come sailing across it in a most tantalizing way, blotting out the light, and only allowing uncertain glimpses of great dark moors, stretching miles and miles away, with tall black fir-trees standing out phantom-like against the horizon. As we drove up to the house, however, my lady moon suddenly shone out from behind a cloud, and showed me a massive pile of buildings, looking like a black silhouette against the bright background of sky, every gable and turret standing out in bold relief, sharply defined as though drawn in ink. One glimpse and it was gone, suddenly vanishing like a scene in a magic-lantern, for another inky cloud hid the moon, leaving us to descend from the carriage in almost total darkness. The hall door opened, and a blaze of light suddenly dazzled and bewildered me so much, that I did not recover the full use of my senses till I had been for some moments in the presence of my grandparents. I looked round, received a general impression of a large handsome room, with panelled walls, red curtains falling in heavy folds before the windows, and a glorious fire shedding a genial light and warmth throughout the length and breadth, and then turned to look at my grandparents, at the same moment as they turned to look at me. My grandfather was standing before the great open fireplace, the light shining on his bald crown and flowing white beard, his tall, massive figure, knee-breeches, and silver-buckled shoes. Altogether he appeared to be a most imposing personage, though I could not look at him very comfortably, for his keen bright eyes, gleaming like coals of fire under their shaggy white eyebrows, were bent full upon me, inspiring me with an awe such as I had never felt till then. Oh, to have those eyes flashing on one in anger! I trembled at the bare idea. However, he seemed to have no thought of such a thing at that moment, for he called me 'a cannie

little lass,' patted me benignly on the head, and told me to go and kiss my grandmother, a proceeding to which I had not the slightest objection, for she was a kindly-faced old lady, stately, yet benevolent, with soft blue eyes and silver hair. I was much impressed by her dress, which was very rich and striking. She wore a petticoat of deep purple satin, with a brocaded upper skirt open in front, and a black velvet bodice fastened with diamond clasps; just such a costume, in fact, as you may see in many old pictures. She kissed me very kindly, and calling to a boy about a year older than myself, whom I had not yet perceived, told him to do the same, saying that I would make him a nice little wife. Sandy—so the boy was called, and certainly he deserved his name, for he had most decidedly sandy hair, and a complexion speckled like a turkey's egg,—Sandy, I say, scrutinized me closely for several moments, but apparently I had not the honour of pleasing him, for presently out came his dictum, delivered with the broadest Scotch accent, 'I'll no hae her.' 'Nor I you!' I retorted, flashing back at him a look of equal indifference, and much greater contempt; whereupon our elders smiled, which I thought very insulting of them, for I considered that the boy had behaved exceedingly rude, and that I had a perfect right to put him down. Supper followed, which we took in our travelling-dresses, only removing our bonnets, and then we drew round the fire, my grandmother making me sit on a low stool at her feet, and lean my head against her beautiful satin petticoat, whilst her soft jewelled hand every now and then stroked my hair, as she talked with the rest. It was very warm and comfortable sitting there in that glow of firelight, and presently the voices became fainter and fainter, and I must have been dropping off to sleep, when I heard my grandmother exclaim: 'Bless the bairn! how weary she seems, and well she may, after such a long, long journey. Daughter, shall I ring for my waiting-woman to put her to bed?' My mother thanked, but declined the offered help, saying she would take me upstairs herself. Accordingly the tall footman was summoned, who conducted us to the foot of the staircase, and delivered us over to the guidance of the waiting-woman, with great ceremony, walking in front, and carrying a lighted candle, very much in the manner in which we at home were accustomed to play at 'The Emperor of Morocco,' though none of us could ever compose our countenances to the perfection of solemn gravity exhibited by my

friend the tall footman. What sort of room we were ushered into I really couldn't tell, for I was much too sleepy to do anything but suffer myself to be passively undressed, and remember nothing but the exceeding comfort of lying down in a soft warm bed, feeling my mother tuck me in, and receiving her good-night kiss; then I fell asleep, too tired even to dream."

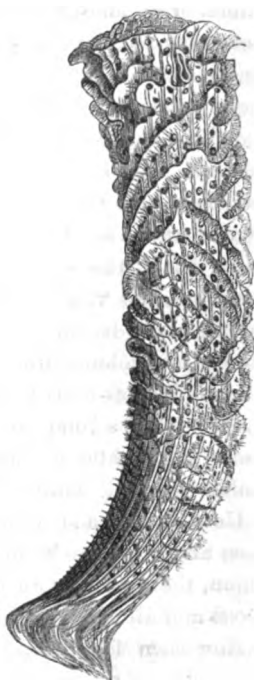
(To be continued.)

SPONGES.

 ONE fancies it would be easier to begin an amateur paper on so wide a subject as sponges, if one knew precisely what had roused the curiosity of the young lady who has inquired about them. Whether, for instance, a squeeze of her Turkey friend in the bath that morning set her wondering why it took in and let out such a quantity of water so easily, or whether she had been shown a specimen of that marvellous formation, "Venus' Flower-basket" (*Euplectella aspergillum**), from the Philippine Islands, and was startled out of all propriety to hear it called a sponge.

Contrast cannot go much farther externally perhaps than between these two as we generally see them; the one an irregular-shaped elastic lump, which no amount of pressure can injure; the other, a symmetrical cornucopia of spun-glass lace in appearance (if the reader will be pleased to imagine such a thing), and so brittle, that a slight tap makes a hole in its elegant network, or breaks off a plait of its tender frilling.

And yet both are sponges! No wonder if those who hear the statement for the first time desire some explanation: those who do not, indeed, must have



VENUS' FLOWER BASKET.

* *Euplectella aspergillum*. Owen. *Alcyoncellum speciosum*. Quoy et Gaimard. (We have used the name by which it is known at the British Museum.)